

40 Developmental Assets® for Early Childhood (ages 3 to 5)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



External Assets

Support

1. **Family support**—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) provide the child with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child's individuality.
2. **Positive family communication**—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.
3. **Other adult relationships**—With the family's support, the child experiences consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family.
4. **Caring neighbors**—The child's network of relationships includes neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.
5. **Caring climate in child-care and educational settings**—Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure.
6. **Parent involvement in child care and education**—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers together create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child's successful growth.

Empowerment

7. **Community cherishes and values young children**—Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
8. **Children seen as resources**—The community demonstrates that children are valuable resources by investing in a child-rearing system of family support and high-quality activities and resources to meet children's physical, social, and emotional needs.
9. **Service to others**—The child has opportunities to perform simple but meaningful and caring actions for others.
10. **Safety**—Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children's health and safety.

Boundaries & Expectations

11. **Family boundaries**—The family provides consistent supervision for the child and maintains reasonable guidelines for behavior that the child can understand and achieve.
12. **Boundaries in child-care and educational settings**—Caregivers and educators use positive approaches to discipline and natural consequences to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behaviors.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors encourage the child in positive, acceptable behavior, as well as intervene in negative behavior, in a supportive, nonthreatening way.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s), caregivers, and other adults model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles.
15. **Positive peer relationships**—Parent(s) and caregivers seek to provide opportunities for the child to interact positively with other children.
16. **Positive expectations**—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers encourage and support the child in behaving appropriately, undertaking challenging tasks, and performing activities to the best of her or his abilities.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Play and creative activities**—The child has daily opportunities to play in ways that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others.
18. **Out-of-home and community programs**—The child experiences well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings.
19. **Religious community**—The child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.
20. **Time at home**—The child spends most of her or his time at home participating in family activities and playing constructively, with parent(s) guiding TV and electronic game use.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. **Motivation to mastery**—The child responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy, resulting in the pleasure of mastering new learning and skills.
22. **Engagement in learning experiences**—The child fully participates in a variety of activities that offer opportunities for learning.
23. **Home-program connection**—The child experiences security, consistency, and connections between home and out-of-home care programs and learning activities.
24. **Bonding to programs**—The child forms meaningful connections with out-of-home care and educational programs.
25. **Early literacy**—The child enjoys a variety of pre-reading activities, including adults reading to her or him daily, looking at and handling books, playing with a variety of media, and showing interest in pictures, letters, and numbers.

Positive Values

26. **Caring**—The child begins to show empathy, understanding, and awareness of others' feelings.
27. **Equality and social justice**—The child begins to show concern for people who are excluded from play and other activities or not treated fairly because they are different.
28. **Integrity**—The child begins to express her or his views appropriately and to stand up for a growing sense of what is fair and right.
29. **Honesty**—The child begins to understand the difference between truth and lies, and is truthful to the extent of her or his understanding.
30. **Responsibility**—The child begins to follow through on simple tasks to take care of her- or himself and to help others.
31. **Self-regulation**—The child increasingly can identify, regulate, and control her or his behaviors in healthy ways, using adult support constructively in particularly stressful situations.

Social Competencies









32. **Planning and decision making**—The child begins to plan for the immediate future, choosing from among several options and trying to solve problems.
33. **Interpersonal skills**—The child cooperates, shares, plays harmoniously, and comforts others in distress.
34. **Cultural awareness and sensitivity**—The child begins to learn about her or his own cultural identity and to show acceptance of people who are racially, physically, culturally, or ethnically different from her or him.
35. **Resistance skills**—The child begins to sense danger accurately, to seek help from trusted adults, and to resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable or risky behavior.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—The child begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language.

Positive Identity

37. **Personal power**—The child can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
38. **Self-esteem**—The child likes her- or himself and has a growing sense of being valued by others.
39. **Sense of purpose**—The child anticipates new opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up.
40. **Positive view of personal future**—The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that he or she has a positive place in it.

40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. The percentages of young people who report experiencing each asset were gathered from the administration of the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* survey of almost 90,000 youth in the 2010 school year.

| Asset type | Asset name and definition | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| EXTERNAL ASSETS | Support  | 1. Family Support -Family life provides high levels of love and support. 72% 2. Positive Family Communication -Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 32% 3. Other Adult Relationships -Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 50% 4. Caring Neighborhood -Young person experiences caring neighbors. 40% 5. Caring School Climate -School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 35% 6. Parent Involvement in Schooling -Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. 33% |
| | Empowerment  | 7. Community Values Youth -Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 25% 8. Youth as Resources -Young people are given useful roles in the community. 32% 9. Service to Others -Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 50% 10. Safety -Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. 54% |
| | Boundaries & Expectations  | 11. Family Boundaries -Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 47% 12. School Boundaries -School provides clear rules and consequences. 56% 13. Neighborhood Boundaries -Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 48% 14. Adult Role Models -Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 28% 15. Positive Peer Influence -Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 68% 16. High Expectations -Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. 55% |
| | Constructive Use of Time  | 17. Creative Activities -Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 20% 18. Youth Programs -Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 61% 19. Religious Community -Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 51% 20. Time at Home -Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week. 56% |
| | Commitment to Learning  | 21. Achievement Motivation -Young person is motivated to do well in school. 71% 22. School Engagement -Young person is actively engaged in learning. 62% 23. Homework -Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 53% 24. Bonding to School -Young person cares about her or his school. 61% 25. Reading for Pleasure -Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week. 23% |
| | Positive Values  | 26. Caring -Young person places high value on helping other people. 52% 27. Equality and Social Justice -Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 54% 28. Integrity -Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 71% 29. Honesty -Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 69% 30. Responsibility -Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 67% 31. Restraint -Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. 47% |
| | Social Competencies  | 32. Planning and Decision Making -Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33% 33. Interpersonal Competence -Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 48% 34. Cultural Competence -Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 42% 35. Resistance Skills -Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 45% 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution -Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. 44% |
| | Positive Identity  | 37. Personal Power -Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 45% 38. Self-Esteem -Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 52% 39. Sense of Purpose - Young person reports that "my life has purpose." 63% 40. Positive view of personal future - Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. 75% |